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JUNE 23-JULY 6, 2016

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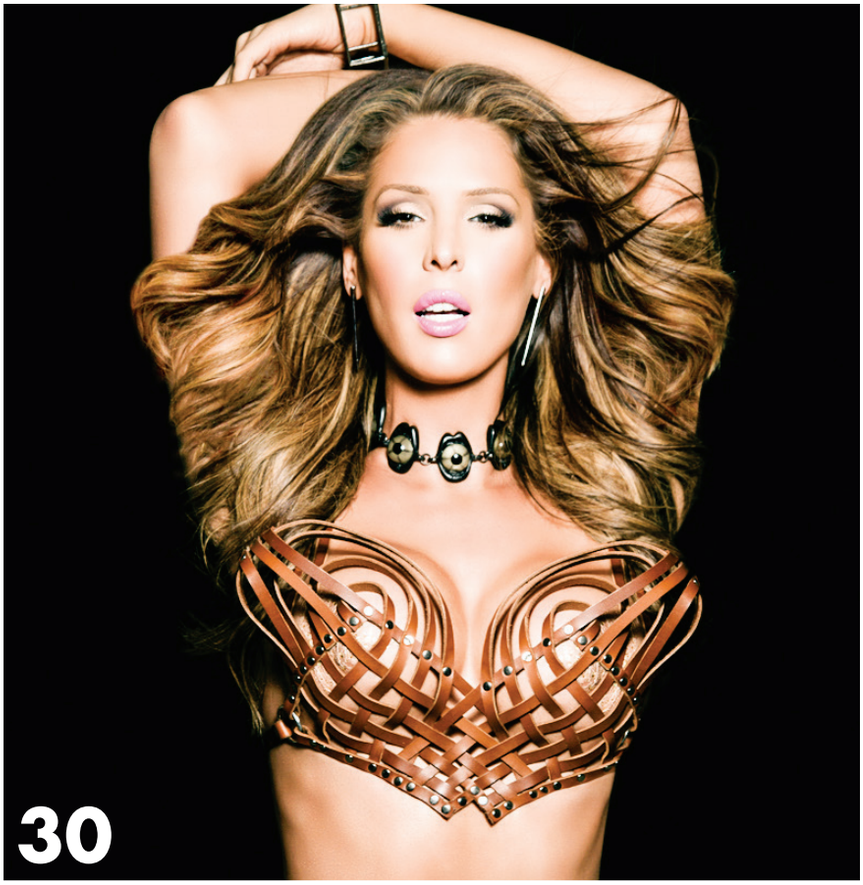
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Spirit of '76, Orlando.
"Bloodied but Unbowed"
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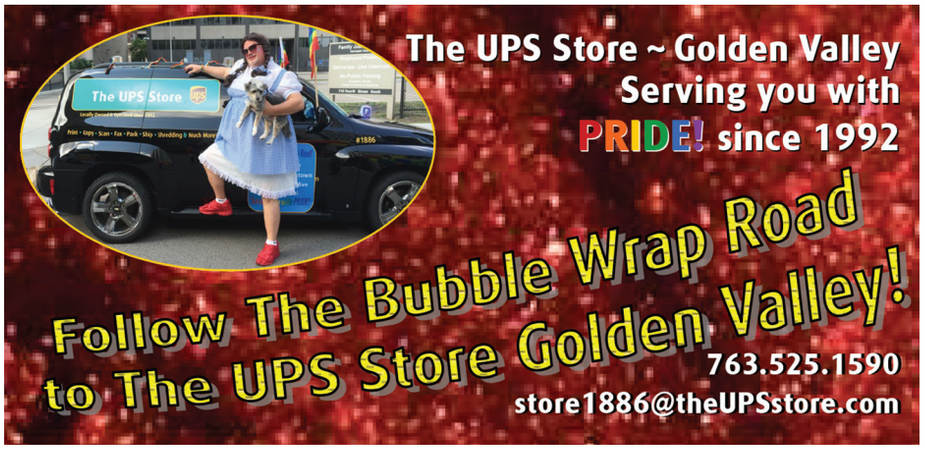


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SPIRIT OF '76

A Coward Strikes Again

The tragedy in Orlando, Fla. is a lesson in history and a painful one at that. This coward struck at our community attacking harmless, defenseless, innocuous, average Americans, members of a community who did no harm to him or his. The wonton taking of life because of his intolerance is such a barbaric act as to strike our community to its heart. To average, thinking people it is incomprehensible. To non-average, thinking people it was expected for a long time.

Much has been said as to why this was "allowed to occur." Contrary to those running for president who wish to take political advantage in this time of tragedy, this is not an issue of access to guns, nor it is an issue about immigration. This cowardly attack is solely an issue of religion.

When this country was founded, we were a group of 13 colonies all of whom had different religions. Our ability to form a single country was reached by a compromise on religion. In a historic event, we decided that there would not be a single religion for this country. We decided that the United States of America would have no state religion, unlike our European ancestors. Our founding fathers believed that we should attract the best and the brightest and those seeking freedom to worship as they wished. In fact, the First Amendment to the Constitution states: "Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof."



In the United States of America, you have the right to worship as you wish, free from any interference from the state. This is sacrosanct in who we are and what we believe in. It is an idea essential to a modern democracy. However, as much as you are free to worship as you wish, you are not allowed to impose your religious views on others. This is the respect we show to all of our neighbors and fellow citizens.

For example, as a Muslim cab driver holding a public license, you do not have the right to refuse to take a person home from the airport because they are carrying a bottle of alcohol. That is the imposition of your religious views on someone else's life. You do not have that right in this country. You have the right to worship in the mosque of your choice. That is what the First Amendment of the U.S. Constitution is all about: respect for others.

This coward who thought that he had the right to impose his religious views on the rest of us was frustrated because he did not think in terms of living his modern life in the 21st century. He was stuck in the 12th century. However, he did not have the right to impose that on the rest of us. He did not have the right to kill us because we think differently. He needed to tolerate others, and himself. He needed to get over it, and get a life; not take one. ■

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Dear Editor,

Omar Mateen was disgusted at the sight of two gays kissing in Miami. The devout went on to make our community his target of choice among the sea of Western infidels ISIS despises. BigGayNews regularly reports on ISIS mechanically throwing gays off rooftops, and stoning women. Let's make no mistake. The common thread between the latest shootings and the 9/11/01 events is religion, not assault weapons. Praying to our own gods and indoctrinating our children can only fuel the clash between reason and religion. Let's seize this opportunity to let our legal system prevail over faiths.

Pierre Tardif

Dear Editor,

As I listen to the reports of the horrific massacre in Orlando, I am acutely reminded of an experience with my transgender sister shortly after she began living as her true self. My sister had been my older brother and I had invested many of the attributes a younger brother gives to their older sibling: stronger, bigger, braver than me (all of those continue to be true after her transition), so I was taken aback as I walked her to her car following dinner at local restaurant. As we began to turn the corner from a well lit street to one more dimly illuminated, she stopped and looked back over her shoulder. I asked her what she was doing and she told me she was making sure there wasn't anyone around so that she knew she wasn't being followed (and was safe). I asked her why (she had never done that before) and she reminded me she was now female and as such, she was far more vulnerable than her younger (male) brother, who didn't give a second thought in walking down the street. My sister has a double whammy: she's transgender and she's female. She invokes fear in those already predisposed to thinking of others as "less than" because of gender or orientation. And, despite all the rhetoric of Islamic radicalism let us not forget this shooting was prompted because of homophobia and fear. His actions have once again stripped away our feelings of safety and reminded us there continue to be people out there who hate and take drastic action to fulfill their hate.

Mark Krug
Owatonna, MN
In full disclosure, Ellen Krug is my sister (and I am so proud of her).

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A WORD IN EDGEWISE | BY E.B. BOATNER

In the Long Run II

I recently wrote about Roberta "Bobbi" Gibb who sneaked into the 1966 Boston Marathon after being told that women were not physiologically capable of running the 26.2-mile course (issue 547). She ran it in 3:21:40, garnering cheers of support and a handshake from Massachusetts Governor John Volpe.

The Boston Marathon should then have been open to all comers, but the following year, 1967, when Kathrine Switzer entered legally, signing her application simply "K.A. Switzer," she was grabbed en route by race manager Jock Semple, yelling, "Get the hell out of my race!" (Google the iconic photos.) Switzer managed to finish the race, but still, it was 1971 before the AAU (Amateur Athletic Union) officially allowed women runners.

It's both saddening and significant to see how discrimination can keep its stranglehold in the face of all reason and empiric evidence. Perhaps one may discern the seeds of such thinking in the comments of two men running against Gibb in 1966. Charles Stalzer, then a 38-year-old Navy captain, later recounted that after being passed by Gibb he thought, "No way a girl is going to beat me." Another called her passing him "a bit of a blow to my male ego."

Current news is saturated with the case of the Stanford swimmer given a tap-on-the-wrist sentence for raping a young woman, his father is angered his son has to pay anything for "20 minutes of action." An appalling assessment of rape, and not one I mean to make analogous to the male runners' comments, but there does seem to be some inherent awfulness, 50 years on, in boys/men seeing any woman doing well in any field to which they feel solely entitled.

There is a rape mentality today in secondary independent schools, colleges, and universities in which the ex-Stanford student is but one egregious example. Male anger against women is not a thing of the past. Women, once barred from higher education and top jobs, now excel in them.

Add in the likes of Colorado's anti-gay pastor Kevin Swanson who broadcasts that voting for a woman will make your daughters lesbians, and it becomes clear that enlightenment is far from universal, for women as well as for blacks. Just look at where the intransigent racism has landed the political landscape today. ■







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Two exceptional and very different dance companies with notable head choreographer/artistic directors are shaping the first Cowles collaborative dance project: the rigorously athletic Black Label Movement directed by Carl Flink and the Afro-Brazilian-based dance fusion of Contempo Physical Dance directed by Marciano Silva dos Santos. New collaborations between the two, as well as a presentation of one of each group's repertoire favorites, can be seen in the Cowles space.

A MIDSUMMER NIGHT'S DREAM

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It is not only William Shakespeare's most popular comedy, but *A Midsummer Night's Dream* is the most popular comedy ever, period. What could be better than seeing it outside during midsummer? The Classical Actors Ensemble has shaped into a first-rate interpreter of the Shakespeare canon and they always get the nuance and feelings beneath the surface.

Director Michael Kelley shares, "Love comes in many forms: adolescent, passionate, mature, and all the emotions in the middle. In *A Midsummer Night's Dream* we get to see all of these approaches to love played out in the visceral setting of nature. All the characters want something: Demetrius (Justin Hooper) wants Hermia (Marika Proctor), Helena (Hannah Steblay) wants Demetrius, Bottom (Art Moss) wants all the parts, and Puck (Timothy Daly) wants to mess it all up. The play is driven by the extremes of what people want. Everyone is driven to something in the play but there's a wall in front of it. However, it is a comedy, and by the end we get to see the energetic, fun, and comedic way those walls get torn down!"

CALENDAR GIRLS

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Nudity has been regarded as judgmentally synonymous with sex by tens, if not hundreds, of millions of people. And those same millions see both as something to be ashamed of. That means if you rightly point out that we shouldn't be ashamed of our bodies, you can be sure that someone will insist that you are pushing sex. You can even be stigmatized just for saying it.

Of course, there were ancients who thought the body reflected the divine. Indeed, many still hold this view, though they come up against scorn and mockery. Recall when $8,000 was spent in 2002 to cover the Department of Justice's nude statues.

In *Calendar Girls*, Tim Firth's play based on the 2003 film, a group of women grapple with nudity issues when they rally behind a friend who has suffered a loss. They are confronted with both societal and self-induced judgments when they agree to pose nude for a calendar in order to benefit a charity. Using clever positioning with flower arrangements, knitting projects, and cakes they are able to avoid full frontal.

A stellar cast thrashes out differences between the women. Laurel Armstrong's Cora doesn't suffer the inhibitions as does the group's uptight leader played by Julia Cook. Karen Weber is a society lady, in contrast to Anna Hickey as Elaine, a flirtatious young hairstylist.

Director Mary Finnerty says *Calendar Girls* "celebrates how deliciously human we are while also revealing how incredibly generous we can be when one of our own is in need of hope. The movie is fun, but the play is so much better. It is a charming, hilarious and moving portrait of the depth of female friendship. The characters are more fully drawn and each woman conquers some fear or challenge to be photographed in the nude and to weather the fallout which follows."

LE SWITCH

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Chicago playwright Philip

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Dawkins has become an American playwright of consequence. His comedy, *Charm*, recently produced by Mixed Blood Theatre, penetrates the contradictions and challenges of being older and transgender, as well as volatile dynamics among queer youth. Dawkins' other recent comedy, *Le Switch*, now runs at the Jungle Theater.

In *Le Switch*, he examines generational differences between gay men in this brave new era of marriage equality. Put in context with *Charm* and another Dawkins work, *The Homosexuals*, it gives further evidence of the playwright's multi-dimensional queer overview.

Jeremy Cohen has directed *Le Switch* for Jungle Theater. He shares that "by setting the play in both 2012 and 2014 — in acts one and two respectively — Philip has truly landed these characters right in the middle of marriage equality starting to pass, state by state, around the country. One of the extraordinary lenses that Philip gives to the audience is three different generations of gay men who have lived through some deeply historical moments in gay history. The oldest is in his 50s, which means that, there in NYC, he watched as all of his friends died around him in the '80s; and he himself was in a 25-year relationship that ended when his partner dies of cancer six months before the play begins.'"

Cohen continues, "On the opposite end of the spectrum, the youngest character is 23 and talks about 'never having had to come out' and he lives through a more expansive queer identity that doesn't exclude the idea of marriage solely as an antiquated, obsolete institution. Smack in the middle are two men very much straddling these two narratives: one who, on the night marriage equality passed in New York, decides to marry his boyfriend of barely a year, and the other who spends the play quite torn, and wrestling with the many of the mythologies that he created based on where and how he grew up, and that have calcified over the years."

In summation, Cohen states, "As with many great artists: Philip puts the myriad equations on the table, and with quite a deft pen, paints with great detail the challenges that await anyone who has ever, or is currently, contemplating these ideas."



Le Switch. Photo courtesy of the Jungle Theater



Calendar Girls. Photo by Petronella J. Ytsma

OFFSTAGE VOICES: LIFE IN TWIN CITIES THEATER

PegGuilfoyle.com or shop.mnhs.org

The Twin Cities looms as one of the continent's major theatrical metropolitan areas. Since the inception of the Guthrie and Children's Theatres in the 1960s, new commercial, experimental, and in-between theaters have continually added to the mix. Not to mention some that predated the 1960s.

Peg Guilfoyle has brilliantly observed the Twin Cities scene over decades. A stage and production manager for iconic and controversial Guthrie artistic directors Liviu Ciulei and Garland Wright, she understands the infrastructures and processes unique to the various crafts involved in theatrical art.

Her remarkable book, *Offstage Voices: Life in Twin Cities Theater* (Minnesota Historical Society Press), is a must for anyone involved in show business or not. This sparkling and engagingly readable overview tells you who the scene's major players are; rehearsal process details to interest both professionals and laypersons; why we are a destination for those wanting to make a living in theater; and insights about numerous smaller theaters, including thoughts of some of their core artists.

One often hears people say offhandedly, "What a great theater town!" And that's terrific. But Guilfoyle gives us a scrupulous and exciting examination of just what that actually means and involves. ■



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TRAVEL | BY CARLA WALDEMAR



Melk Abbey, Austria. Photos by Carla Waldemar

DRIFTING DOWN THE

Danube

I can't resist a fire sale. Lurking amid the daily deluge of emails was one that stopped my heart: a Viking River Cruise shaving the usual ridiculous single supplement and paring airfare to — not a misprint — a mere $100. Can't stay home for that price. So I wrote a check for a week-long Danube cruise on a 180-passenger ship including all (restaurant-quality) meals and freely pouring wine, as well as free walking tours of stops along the famous river. The clincher was a chance to linger in Budapest at the end of the tour.

But first, sweet little Passau, in Churmany (as our guides called their native land): straight out of a medieval atlas, complete with 15th-century castle-fort overlooking the imperial town hall, and, behind it, the impossibly Baroque St. Stephen's Cathedral, crawling with curlicues, lashings of gold leaf, and an outsized organ. By contrast, tiny Kloster Niedernburg of 1150, white and chaste, sheltered sculptures of earnest Gothic saints.

Fast forward to another Passau monastery that today is home to the Museum of Contemporary Art, exploding with Expressionist surprises. From there, follow the cobblestones to Hell's Alley, the modern-day home of indie crafts and artists' galleries.

Gliding again along the Danube (sorry: green, not blue), it's quiet enough to hear birdsong from passing forests as we dine on Napoleon of crab and tuna tartare, grilled perch (or sirloin), and passion fruit mousse on our way to Austria. Linz, its third-largest (yet cozy-small) city, was first settled by traveling Romans. Towering over its main square is a voluptuous, gold-crowned column, erected in 1763 as thanks for averting the





(From left) **Fishermen's Bastion overlooking the Danube, Budapest. St. Stephen's Cathedral, Vienna. Baroque churchtower overlooking the Danube in tiny Durnstein, Austria.**

plague. But it failed to stop the plague fomented by its homeboy, Adolph Hitler, who returned to stand on the very balcony I'm photographing to announce his annexation of Austria.

Find respite in the cathedral where composer Anton Bruckner played the organ, or the Rococo charmer where Mozart worshiped while writing his Linz Symphony. Hearing music wafting from the Ursuline church, I pause for a free concert of the Linz Chamber Orchestra and a very loud soprano, then head to Lentos, the city's provocative Museum of Contemporary Art, where Warhol and Oldenburg vie with spicy Austrian Secessionists Klimt and Schiele. Then dinnertime and a feast of smoked salmon draped in caviar, Chateaubriand or mahi, and Valrhona chocolate tart as we set sail for Melk.

And there it is, looming on a clifftop: the famed Melk Abbey, a twin-towered Baroque confection showcasing precious art, a renowned library and fancy chapel (it's the sister abbey of our own St. John's). But it's nature I'm worshiping as we slip along the Wachau Valley amid vineyards and silhouettes of castles till we anchor at tiny, camera-ready Dürnstein, where the foolish or intrepid can undertake a 30-minute climb to the castle where Richard the Lion Hearted was held prisoner.

My knees complained the next day as we trade bucolic scenery for the scintillation of Vienna. We have a full day to conquer the regal city, with free walking or bus tour before striking out solo to traipse amid the monumental monuments to their own glory erected by the Hapsburgs. And the Opera House. And St. Stephen's iconic cathedral. The Jewish Quarter. The shopping streets, anchored by rival pastry palaces Demel and Sacher, dueling it out over the city's famous torte. Then the Naschmarkt's teeming lanes of food stalls, and nearby Secessionist Museum, with its Art Nouveau Beethoven frieze. More Secessionists, at their naughtiest, in the MUMOK and Leopold Museums of the Museumsquartier, with its vast forecourt of cement loungers claimed by sunning locals.

Running on empty, I head to the venerable coffeehouse/café Griensteidl — think burgundy drapes and velvet banquettes serviced by aging waiters in formal black and white, who greet me with "Grüss Gott," then deliver my paprika chicken with spaetzle before a parting "Auf wiedersehen."

Our first glimpse of Bratislava, the riverside capitol of Slovakia, is its looming hilltop castle. It oversees a town of modest charms populated by plucky folks who are still emerging from the punishing times of Nazi, then Soviet, rule. The 14th-century St. Martin's Cathedral has outlived all that. It's topped not with the usual cross, rather the Hungarian crown, for under that empire, kings were crowned here for 250 years. Beethoven's "Missa Solemnis" was first performed within, where Liszt and Mozart also played. Today a Holocaust memorial rises in its shadow, aside a wall of vibrant graffiti.

Best for last: After passing through our final set of locks (cheering shoreside soccer players as we waited), we approached Budapest at its most breathtaking: ten at night, when thousands of lights dance a welcome from its iconic castle on the Danube's Buda side to its famous Parliament marshalling Pest's shore, linked with blazing bridges. How can you fail to fall head over heels for a city as pretty as this?

By morning we made fast work of the usual bounteous breakfast (eggs Benedict, anyone?) and hit the sites, starting with a funicular ride up Buda's hill to traipse aside that mighty castle, on to St. Matthias Church and aside it, the Fishermen's Bastion overlook, like a mirage from Disneyland. Then back across the river by tram to ramble along Andrássy, the Champs-Elysees of Budapest, past the elegant Opera House, the Paris Department Store (nowadays a grand bookstore-cum-gorgeous café), up to Heroes Square, lined with larger than-life statues.

From there, a tram ride to the Central Market (same designer as the Eiffel Tower), crammed with edibles and crafts, then back to Parliament and, close by, St. Stephen's Cathedral, rivaling his holy home in Vienna. Inside, votive candles lead to the saint himself — well, at least his right hand — preserved in a side chapel.

Then, free time! I lost my way in the maze of the Jewish Quarter, where, despite the murder of half its citizens, three grand synagogues remain. As does tiny Spinoza, hangout of the artsy set. But I was there for the food: a lunch of goulash soup, roast goose with red cabbage and potato cake, then apple strudel. And beer.

Sated, I explored Budapest's myriad museums: The National, detailing the story of its saints and kings, backed by glittering crowns and crucifixes. Next, the Museum of Applied Arts, a glorious Art Nouveau wonder, inside and out. Then the Ludwig Museum of Contemporary Art, showcasing works of potent political pushback to authority (one work: "Communism Never Happened"). Finally, the epic House of Terror, located in the former HQ of the Nazi, then Soviet, Secret Police, with its basement cells and accounts by survivors sent to the gulags.

Which calls for a coffee. Or two. I sought a cappuccino in Callas, an Art Nouveau beauty aside the Opera House, then Café Central, a throwback to the good old days of past centuries. After which, I promptly got lost. Friendly locals were quick to whip out maps on cell phones, walk me to the Metro station, whatever it took to assure I loved their city.

It worked. I can't wait to return. For info, visit www.vikingrivercruises.com. ■

TRAVEL | BY CARLA WALDEMAR



One-room schoolhouse attended by Grant Wood. Photo by Carla Waldemar

GRANT WOOD'S IOWA

TAKE IT FOR GRANT-ED

The farmer with the pitchfork, the lady in the apron, the arched window of the farmhouse where they stand: just about the most widely-recognized painting in the whole wide world. (It's actually number two, beat out by "Mona Lisa.") "American Gothic" — revered, emulated, parodied — was painted by Iowan Grant Wood in his Cedar Rapids studio in 1930. It won third place in the Art Institute of Chicago's exhibition, and there it resides today.

But everything else about Grant Wood belongs to Cedar Rapids, where his 125th birth anniversary is hailed this year. One of the most irreverent salutes (he'd love it) is "Overalls All Over": 25 pairs of the iconic couple placed around town (maps available), each painted with a different twist: "The American Hipsters" with their lattes; "Andy & Edie", a Warhol lookalike; and General Mills-sponsored "Gothic Spoonful". A commissioned American Gothic Symphony will be performed in September.

But other Wood-work is on view around town year-in, year-out. Start with the Cedar Rapids Museum of Art, which boasts the world's largest collection of the artist's work: 300 pieces, which salute his skills as a carpenter and metalworker, too (Oh, that corncob chandelier!). Trace his stylistic evolution from Impressionism following an early trip to Paris to the tightened and simplified style of his maturity, emulating the meticulously rendered portraits of artists like Durer, Memling and the Dutch.

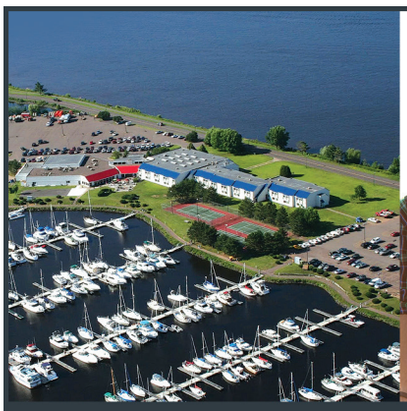
Oh, look! There's the "Woman with Plants" (his mom in 1929). And Wood's landscapes like "Young Corn" of 1931 with those rolling hills, repeating rows and lollipop trees. Also the works of his BFF, fellow painter Marvin Cone. (It was Marvin who used to come by the Carnegie Library where the teenage Grant would sleep to guard its artworks. Marvin would toss pebbles at the window and yell, "Wake up, Grant! We've got

CONTINUED ON PAGE 28



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(From left) **Farmhouse painted a la "America Gothic". "America Gothic" statues, to be placed around town in Cedar Rapids to celebrate Grant Woods' Birthday Anniversary.** Photos by Carla Waldemar

to go to school!")

A short hike — call it a pilgrim's procession — takes you inside the tickings of Grant Wood's mind: his tiny-as-a-playhouse studio, where he lived with Mom and sister Nan, both of whom he painted here. His front door, fashioned from a coffin lid, supports a clock face dial that indicates his whereabouts: taking a bath, throwing a party, etc.

It's the carriage house of a patron who previously owned the sweeping Brucemoor estate with its Queen Anne mansion. At 35, just retired from teaching to pursue art, Wood was hired to decorate a sleeping porch for the family's daughter: a bower of plaster rosebushes and forest creatures for which, in 1924, he was paid $182 (currently worth $3.5 million). Don't miss the basement's man cave, fashioned in exuberantly tacky Tahitian style, complete with waterfall.

Coe College's library sports a mini-museum of works by Marvin Cone, who established its art department in 1934, and contains Wood's portrait of his buddy as well as seven immense mural figures, originally painted to decorate a coffee shop. (Yes, that's Mrs. Cone posing as a farmwife.) P.S. The library also houses works by the likes of Picasso and Matisse.

At the Iowa Masonic Library and Museum, blaze a trail through its collections donated by eccentric hobbyists to gaze at Wood's "First Three Degrees of Free Masonry" of 1921. Or not. But do not miss the Veterans Memorial building, where Wood lobbied to create an immense stained glass window depicting six soldiers, one for each war, including the shirtless figure representing 1812, rumored to be Wood's boyfriend. The artist had never worked in glass before, but sped off to Munich for a crash course in its design, which irked Cedar Rapids' citizens no end, like sleeping with the enemy so close after the finale of World War I.

Back downtown, explore the gorgeous former movie palace of 1928, now serving Theatre Cedar Rapids, where Wood was a founding member. Nearby, the Paramount, an ultra-ornate Gothic Moorish movie house also of 1928, now hosts concerts.

Okay, you wonder: Is there anything else to wow visitors in Cedar Rapids? You bet, starting with Czech Village, hosting the National Czech & Slovak Museum & Library, with its actual immigrant house of the 1880s, complete with accordion, gas lamps, and enameled dishpan. Continue to the museum's freedom exhibit, where life-size figures of the 19th and 20th centuries "speak" of what brought them here (serfdom to the Communist dictatorship). Here, the story of the Czech and Slovak people is told from the ninth to 20th century, climaxing in a vivid flurry of embroidered costumes and collection of stylish blown glass, a favorite Czech art form.

The surrounding village is a treasury of bakeries (think: kolaches), antique shops and the Lion Bridge Brewing Company (tour, sip, and eat). Then cross the iconic Lion Bridge to NewBo, aka New Bohemia, and its meeting place, the NewBo covered market, built amid the rehab of the city's disastrous 2008 flood and today hosting weekly gatherings like yoga classes and bike crawls. Across the street, a bookstore rests under a performance space and, beside it, Brewhemia, an artist-forward coffeehouse (breakfast bonanzas like caramelized walnut, pear and brie quiche or cinnamon rolls far too big to be legal). It looks out upon Raygun, an outfit sporting its snarky designs for mugs, towels, onesies and T-shirts with bold slogans like "Cedar Rapids: More Than Just Sex Appeal" and "Listened to NPR Before It Was Cool."

Yeah, yeah, but is there anything to eat? Gotcha covered there, too. Start munching at The Class Act in the design-y Kirkwood Hotel, starring a sublime starter of grilled asparagus with saffron hollandaise and another of scallops paired with bulgar salad and tomato, preceding bacon-wrapped rabbit, duck breast with parsnip puree and pickled cherries, or deconstructed pot pie favoring thigh of guinea hen, rainbow carrots, pea puree, and potato.

At Zin's, feast on a mix of small plates segueing form chile verde pork carnitas to quinoa chickpea salad, from prime rib sandwich to Thai chicken. Look for the line high on the wall that denotes the level of the infamous flood. Head to nearby White Star Ale House for brews galore, abetted by entrées like the kind of pork (shank, chop) that put Iowa on the map. And don't miss a breakfast at the ultimate diner, Riley's Café, famed for eggs-plus-meat-plus-biscuits-plus-more, with waitresses that call you "Baby" and keep the coffee coming. Obama ate here in 2012 and signed the wall to prove it. Did he make it to the gay bar, Club Basix? Don't ask, don't tell. For your own chance, visit www.gocedarrapids.com. ■

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WHAT TO DO

| BY SHANE LUECK |

Let's face it: Pride weekend comes and goes in the blink of an eye, and if you don't plan accordingly, you might just end up missing an event that you *really* wanted to go to. Use this listing of Pride weekend events to plan your weekend. You might just discover something new to do!

THURSDAY, JUNE 23

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Orchestra Hall, 1111 Nicollet Ave., Minneapolis
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TRANSFABULOUS: CREATING COMICS (EVENT 1 OF 6)

Minneapolis Central Library, 300 Nicollet Mall, Minneapolis
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Kathy Griffin

Photo courtesy of Kathy Griffin

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Kicking off the official four-day Twin Cities Pride weekend is Kathy Griffin, one of America's foremost comedians. Two-time Emmy and Grammy award-winning comedian Kathy Griffin is a towering figure on television, on tour and in publishing. She breaks through the entertainment clutter with her universally recognized brand of pull-no-punches comedy. Currently, Kathy Griffin can be seen as host of the E! hit fashion commentary show, *Fashion Police*. Last year, Kathy made history with her 6th consecutive Grammy nomination and first win for Best Comedy Album (*Kathy Griffin: Calm Down Gurrl*), joining Whoopi Goldberg and Lily Tomlin as the only other female comedians to ever win Grammy awards for Best Comedy Album.

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Photo by Aaron Davidson

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Carmen Carrera

Photo by Mike Ruiz

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June 23–25
www.lushmpls.com

Enjoy college pride night on Thursday and a boylesque show featuring a special appearance by Mr. Gay USofA titleholder, Taylor Ashton, as well as the weekly Drag Evolution talent contest. Come back Friday for "Pride's most generous happy hour" and Black Hearts Burlesque. Saturday morning Lush hosts Pride brunch featuring Lush's famous bottomless mimosas. The rest of the day finishes out with drag queen bingo, a Pride edition of Snatch Game, and a Pride block party featuring Alaska Thunderfuck of *RuPaul's Drag Race*.

FRIDAY, JUNE 24

STORIES TOGETHER: PRIDE

East Lake Library, 2727 E Lake St., Minneapolis
June 24, 10:15 a.m., 10:45 a.m.
Registration not required
All are welcome
www.hclib.org

Celebrate family and self-expression during Pride month through books, stories, rhymes, music, and movement. This project is funded with money from Minnesota's Arts and Cultural Heritage Fund.

FRIDAY NIGHT PRIDE PANEL: INTERSECTIONS

Saint Mark's Episcopal Cathedral, 519 Oak Grove St., Minneapolis
June 24, 7:00 p.m.
Free
All are welcome
www.ourcathedral.org

The Intersections panel will feature members of the Twin Cities community who participate in or serve LGBTQ communities, communities of color, and/or a variety of faith convictions and experiences. As stated, "We seek to recognize the intersections of identity in gender, sexuality, race, and faith. Our hope is to engage attendees with difficult conversations, recognizing the complexity of thought and creating space for opening hearts and minds. Saint Mark's and the Pride Committee recognize the tension and trauma around these conversations and are dedicated to offering a pastoral and hope-filled presentation."

FRUIT BOWL

Memory Lanes, 2520 26th Ave. S, Minneapolis
June 24, 5:00–8:00 p.m.
All are welcome
www.facebook.com/rainbowhealth

This is an all ages, sober, tobacco-free event. Hosted by the fabulous Mrs. Margie Pederson, enjoy an evening of free bowling, kids activities, taco bar, karaoke, prizes, a photobooth, and more. Sand volleyball begins at 6:30, bowling at 6:15. Please RSVP.

PRIDE BEER DABBLER

Loring Park, Minneapolis
June 24, 5:30–9:30 p.m.
21+
www.beerdabbler.com

The Beer Dabbler craft beer festival kicking off Twin Cities Pride weekend is back for its fifth year. In previous years the festival brought together food trucks and breweries to craft special pairings. With an updated format this year, the 50+ participating Minnesota breweries will each serve special, one-off or infused beers that celebrate and pay homage to the icons and advocates from the GLBT community, who have played a role in bringing awareness and progress to critical issues in the community like marriage equality and transphobia.

GROWN & SEXY PRIDE

First Avenue Mainroom, 701 First Ave. N, Minneapolis
June 24, 9:00 p.m.
$15
www.first-avenue.com

This year's Grown & Sexy Pride features Carmen Carrera from RuPaul's Drag Race season three. Mark your calendars for this all-night dance party infused with incredible onstage performances. The talent is incomparable, the music is amazing, and all are welcome!

PRIDE SOUL FRIDAY

Icehouse, 2528 Nicollet Ave. S, Minneapolis
June 24, 9:00 p.m.
$12 in advance/ $15 at the door
21+
www.icehousempls.com

Billed as the "flyest night for queer women of color and friends," you're invited to come out and get your dance on! Featuring DJ Keezy, DJ Lady L, and DJ Sophia (from GRRRL PRTY), with special guest performers including Alissa Paris, Bdotcroc, K.Raydio, and more.

FLIP PHONE XXL: PRIDE

Rev Ultralounge, 731 Hennepin Ave., Minneapolis
June 24, 9:00 p.m.–2:00 a.m.
$10–$25
21+
www.facebook.com/FlipPhone

Join FlipPhone at Rev Ultralounge (underneath Union) for an ultimate dance party. You won't want to miss this. Rev has one of the best sound systems in the city! DJ Fancy Restaurant will be throwing down Rihanna, Nicki Minaj, and other hot jams. The evening fantastic drink specials and appearances by Naomi Smalls (RuPaul's Drag Race season eight), Sunny Kiriyama, and Julia Starr.

PLUNGE INTO PRIDE

Muse Event Center, 107 3rd Ave. N, Minneapolis
June 24, 9:00 p.m.–2:00 a.m.
$35–$135
21+
www.facebook.com/EnticingEnt

Powered by Scruff, Plunge Into Pride submerges guests in a world filled with stunning performance art installations, exotic mermen, oceanic go-go dancers, aquatic aerialists and acrobats, and surprises around every corner in an underwater wonderland! Enigmatic and Enticing Entertainment are proud to party for a purpose to benefit Open Arms of Minnesota!

PRIDE WEEKEND AT THE 19 BAR

19 Bar, 19 W 15th St., Minneapolis
June 27–28
www.facebook.com/The19Bar

Party with the 19 Bar Pride weekend! Located only two blocks from Loring Park and never a cover charge makes it a great place to celebrate!

PRIDE WEEKEND AT EAGLEBOLTBAR – SCORCH FIREBALL 2016

eagleBOLTbar, 515 Washington Ave., Minneapolis
June 24–26
Events and times vary by day
www.eagleboltbar.com

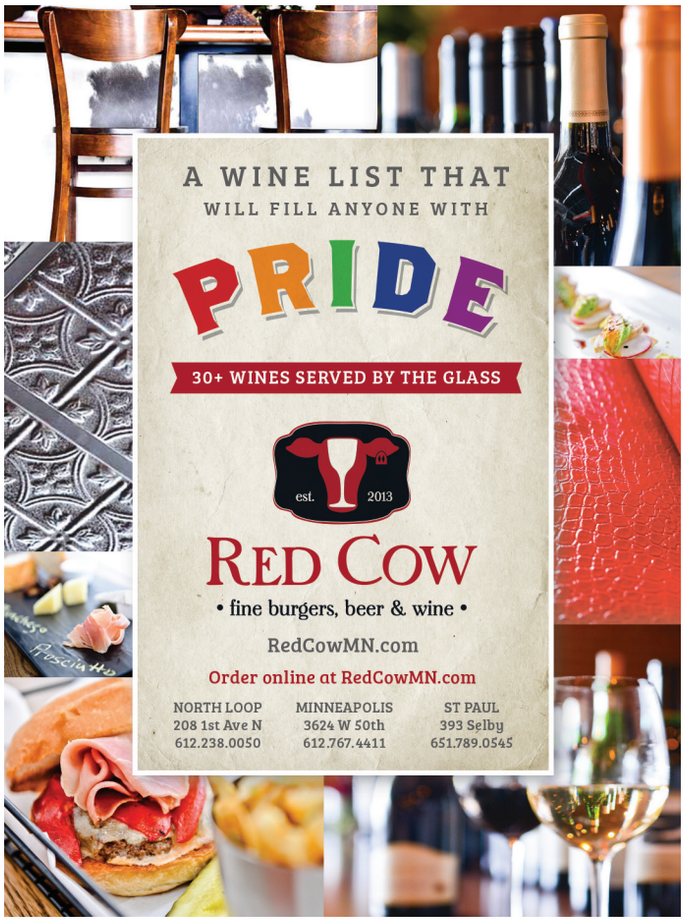
Friday: The best damn happy hour in town with 3-for-1s on Miller products and rail cocktails. Saturday: Bloody Mary Brunch, Raging Stallion Studios model Aleks Buldocek and Brut from American Muscle Hunk followed by Bear Night. Sunday: Bloody Mary Brunch followed by an "All You Can Swallow" Beer Bust and showtunes.

PRIDE WEEKEND AT THE SALOON

The Saloon, 830 Hennepin Ave., Minneapolis
June 24–26
Weekend Pass/$50, Sunday Pass/$25
18+
www.saloonmn.com

The party is going on all weekend, so visit the website for details.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 38


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Photo by Austin Young

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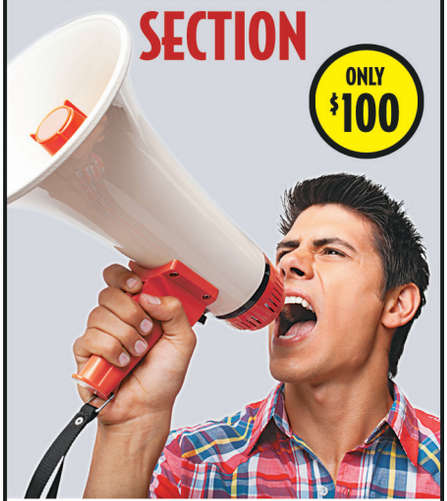
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But be sure to come Sunday, both inside and outside bars will be open for parade viewing party on bleachers, $4 Bloody Marys and mimosas, and Pride's Biggest Sunday Block Party. Don't miss Jordin Sparks performing!

PRIDE WEEKEND AT THE GAY 90's

Gay 90's, 408 Hennepin Ave. S, Minneapolis
June 24–26
18+
www.gay90s.com

The Ladies of Lafemme are performing all weekend, but stop in Friday for Tony Moran, voted one of the top five LGBT DJs and an Annex laser show on Saturday.

SATURDAY, JUNE 25

TWIN CITIES PRIDE FESTIVAL

Loring Park, Minneapolis
June 25–26, 10:00 a.m.–10:00 p.m.
Free
All are welcome
www.tcpride.org

The 2016 Twin Cities Pride Festival features over 400 exhibitors, 40 food and beverage booths, 20 sponsors and 300,000+ visitors participating in this free celebration of the GLBT community.

MIX AT LURCAT

Cafe & Bar Lurcat, 1624 Harmon Place, Minneapolis
June 25, 12:00–10:00 p.m.
www.facebook.com/CafeBarLurcatMpls

MiX it up all day Saturday at Cafe & Bar Lurcat. Enjoy food and drink specials while you bop to the Pride beats of MiX resident DJs Lenka Paris and Shiek. There's no cover and Pride-goers will be rocking both inside the bar and out on the patio. You'll have many food options from which to choose and they'll be serving up drink specials all day courtesy of Absolut.

DRAGGED OUT

Stonewall Stage at Loring Park, Minneapolis
June 25–26, 2:00 p.m.
Free
All are welcome
www.facebook.com/Dragged.Out.MN

Come check out Dragged Out at Twin Cities Pride! Bring all your family and/or friends as it's not too often Dragged Out is at an all ages event! Some of your favorites from the cast will be performing: Blaze Bordeaux, Damien D'Luxe, Xavier, and the host Christina Jackson.

PRIDE SOCIAL POTLUCK

Town House Bar, 1415 University Ave. W, St. Paul
June 25, 3:00–8:00 p.m.
www.townhousebar.com

Stop in at the Town House for the Pride Social Potluck before you head across the river, or come from across the river and join in the fun. Lots of activities planned for the day including a beer bust, games, prizes, music, and a happy hour. Stay after the potluck for Pride After Dark!

PRIDE IN CONCERT

Loring Park, Minneapolis
June 25, 6:00–10:00 p.m.
$10 General Admission, $75 VIP
www.tcpride.org

The centerpiece of the celebration is Saturday's Pride in Concert show, featuring The Pointer Sisters, Adore Delano and The Phoenix Philosophy. Fireworks follow the concert at 10:00 p.m. General admission tickets include admission to the Beer Garden (at any point on Saturday). The Beer Garden will be serving assorted Budweiser and Coke products. VIP is 21+ and includes complimentary adult beverages and snacks in a tent close to the stage. It's the only place you can get vodka in the park. A VIP ticket means a separate entry (avoid the line!) and other surprises throughout the night.

THE WOMAN'S CLUB PRIDE DANCE

The Woman's Club of Minneapolis, 410 Oak Grove St., Minneapolis
June 25, 8:00 p.m.
Members $20, Nonmembers $25
www.womansclub.org

The Woman's Club of Minneapolis will be hosting its annual Pride Dance with DJ Sheik. View fireworks from the fabulous rooftop overlooking Loring Park. Everyone is welcome.

GRRRL SCOUT SUMMER CAMP PRIDE PARTY

The Cabooze, 917 Cedar Ave., Minneapolis, MN
June 25, 9:00 p.m.–2:00 a.m.
$12
21+
www.cabooze.com

Ready to earn those patches? Grrrl Scout is gearing up for its third annual Pride event, Summer Camp. With a strong commitment to breaking conformity, Grrrl Scout curates a unique array of entertainment, partners, and offerings for each and every event. Summer Camp is no different. This year they promise to be pulling out all the stops with a slumber party theme.

FLIP PHONE XXL: PRIDE

First Avenue Mainroom, 701 N 1st Ave., Minneapolis
June 25, 9:00 p.m.–2:00 a.m.
$10/Advance, $12/Door
18+
www.facebook.com/FlipPhone

Flip Phone is taking over the largest dance floor in town: the legendary First Avenue Mainroom for the ultimate Pride party. Pay tribute to the most popular Flip Phone artists. You'll be dancing all night, celebrating Beyoncé, Britney Spears, Missy Elliott, Lady Gaga, Rihanna, and Katy Perry. These amazing ladies have provided the soundtrack to Prides since the mid-'90s.

VELVET – QUEER DANCE PARTY

Coup d'Etat, 2923 Girard Ave., Minneapolis
June 25, 10:00 p.m.–2:00 a.m.
$5
www.sweetsoiree.events

The last Saturday of the month means VELVET in Uptown. Get down at the swanky, LGBTQ-supportive Coup d'Etat, where DJ Seven will be laying down the sexiest beats from beneath the chandeliers. Special guest DJ appearances from The Insomniac & Jax. Whether you feel like dancing or lounging, watching or partaking, sipping or snacking, you're covered. We're in the sign of Cancer! That means VIP! If your birthday is between June 21 and July 22, you're in for free and get a free drink.

SUNDAY, JUNE 26

RAINBOW RUN 5K

Boom Island Park, 724 Sibley St. NE, Minneapolis
June 26
Registration required
www.tcpride.org

Show your Pride by taking part in the Twin Cities Pride Rainbow Run! Starting at Boom Island and ending near Loring Park, the route takes runners along Hennepin Avenue as spectators begin to gather for the annual Ashley Rukes GLBT Pride Parade.

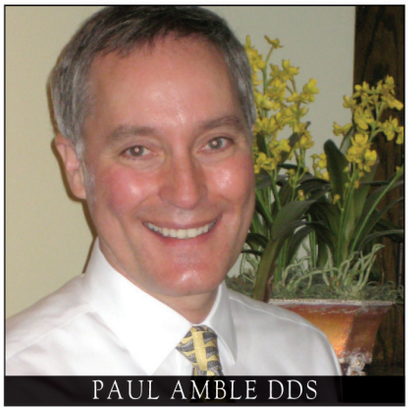
PRIDE IN THE SKY: PARADE ROOFTOP VIEWING PARTY

Crave, 825 Hennepin Ave. Minneapolis
June 26
9:00 a.m. – 6:00 p.m.
$10
21+
www.craveamerica.com

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Photos courtesy of Seven Steakhouse

Bitch 'N' Brunch

Minnesota to watch the parade from the sky. Doors open at 9:00 a.m. with the parade beginning two hours later, but dancing goes on all day. Tickets get you a free cocktail, a $5 donation to OutFront, and non-stop music. To reserve a table contact Crave at pride@craveamerica.com.

BUBBLES & BASS

Union Rooftop , 731 Hennepin Ave., Minneapolis
June 26, 9:00 a.m.–2:00 p.m.
$10–$50
21+
www.facebook.com/EnticingEnt

Enigmatic and Enticing Entertainment are excited to bring an elevated Pride brunch to Union Rooftop! Watch the Twin Cities Pride Parade from a VIP booth, or dance under the sunshine to the beats of DJ Shiek. Union Rooftop will have a large open dance floor and up-beat Pride party atmosphere with fabulous entertainment. Hosted by the legendary drag queen Lady Vajayjay featuring stunning drag queens, bubblicious dancers, avante garde fashion models, and beautiful bubble art to top off the perfect Pride parade experience.

ARISE + SHINE 2016

Rosa Mexicano, 609 Hennepin Ave., Minneapolis
June 26, 10:00 a.m.–1:00 p.m.
$15–$30
All are welcome
www.facebook.com/United-WayAriseProject

Join in the fun on Rosa Mexicano's covered patio (rain or shine) and/or be part of the parade in the roped-off sidewalk area. Enjoy the signature drink, the Arise-a-rita, fun photo opportunities, energetic music, and delicious Mexican food while watching the Pride Parade, and most importantly give back to the community. This event is in partnership with the United Way Arise Project supporting homeless youth.

BITCH 'N' BRUNCH

Seven Restaurant, 700 Hennepin Ave. S, Minneapolis
June 26, 10:00 a.m.–3:00 p.m.
$10 advance, $15 at the door, brunch and bottomless mimosas are an additional $15
www.7mpls.net

Join Bitch Flowers and watch the 2016 Twin Cities Pride parade from the fabulous rooftop of the Seven Skybar. Enjoy the view from the largest rooftop on Hennepin Avenue! The location is a great indoor spot with floor-to-ceiling windows with air conditioned comfort overlooking Hennepin Avenue and will also have the parade on live television monitors. Featuring live sets from DJ Attitude City (Jeff Dubois) and DJ Moose Knuckle (Kris Gigstad).

ASLEY RUKES GLBT PRIDE PARADE

3rd St. and Hennepin Ave., Minneapolis
June 26, 11:00 a.m.
Free
All are welcome
www.tcpride.org

The 2016 Ashley Rukes GLBT Pride Parade will be held, as always, along Hennepin Avenue in downtown Minneapolis. The parade route starts at 3rd and Hennepin and ends at Spruce and Hennepin.

PRIDE PARTY

Café & Bar Lurcat, 1624 Harmon Place, Minneapolis
June 26, 12:00–6:30 p.m.
21+
www.cafelurcat.com

The parade ends where the party starts: at Café & Bar Lurcat! Party comes without a cover and features a giant dance floor. Party goers can enjoy satellite bars both indoors and outdoors, bar-front patio with gorgeous open-air seating, and vodka drink specials and beer tubs. Nibble on Lurcat burgers, Lurcat chicken sandwiches, fries with béarnaise, and of course… signature warm sugar cinnamon donuts!

MUSICAL PRESENTATION: ONE VOICE MIXED CHORUS

Saint Mark's Episcopal Cathedral, 519 Oak Grove St., Minneapolis
June 26, 3:00 p.m.
Free
All are welcome
www.ourcathedral.org

One Voice Mixed Chorus is Minnesota's only — and the nation's largest — lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and straight allies mixed chorus. Founded in 1988, One Voice has been "building community and creating social change by raising our voices in song" for more than 25 years.

QUEER VOICES: AN LGBT READING SERIES

Intermedia Arts, 2822 Lyndale Ave. S, Minneapolis
June 28, 7:00 p.m.
$5-25 suggested donation
www.intermediaarts.org

Since 2005, Intermedia Arts' Queer Voices reading series has been creating a safe space for LGBT writers and audiences to explore the day-to-day material of life without internal or external censorship. Curated by John Medeiros and Andrea Jenkins, Queer Voices is the longest running series of its kind in the nation. ■

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At-Large by John Mark





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In conversation, Delano exudes the chill vibes you would expect: frank, down-to-earth, and totally awesome. While the California native's sounds have matured considerably, the process remains the same.





Singing from a bathtub full of candy hearts, shooting water guns, kicking back cans of PBR, and puking glitter all along the way, Adore Delano's music video for "Take Me There" is a reflection of the artist's playful and carefree nature.

Delano described the video as just that, "I told [the producers] I just wanted to have fun. They're awesome with ideas and understanding me." Adore Delano, also known as Danny Noriega, is no stranger to the music business. An *American Idol* contestant at the age of 18, music was a large part of his career long before his first appearance on *RuPaul's Drag Race*. Adore Delano is the best of both worlds, a talented singer and a talented drag artist, but most importantly, unapologetically himself.

Delano's latest album, *After Party* (2016), released this spring. He shared, "I've grown up a lot since the last album… I'm older, a lot has happened." Much like Delano's *Till Death Do Us Party* (2014), the album is predominantly made up of club bangers, dichotomized by a few more down-beat personal tracks. While on a surface level, the new album appears best suited for the party zone, Delano also proves himself a talented lyricist with songs like "I.C.U." which Delano describes as "one of the more personal tracks."

In "I.C.U," Delano sings:

Open nights to fluorescent lights and the truth / Frozen in my new-shielded skin thanks to you / Honey, I loved the feeling that you gave to my sickly heart / You wanted space even though we're a million miles apart.

Similarly, a personal favorite, "Better Than the Movies," has a driving beat and sweet words like:

Live it up and blame our age Young enough to make mistakes Better than the movies.

Overall, the album exudes a youthful energy, a celebration of living life in the present.

In conversation, Delano exudes the chill vibes you would expect: frank, down-to-earth, and totally awesome. While the California native's sounds have matured considerably, the process remains the same. As Delano explained, "My method is pretty similar as to before. I live experiences down then grab the memory files in my head and create songs out of them."

Whatever the process, it's clearly working. Upon release, *After Party* hit number one on the Billboard Dance/Electronic chart, a proud moment for any recording artist, and a historical moment for the legacy and legitimacy of drag as an art form.

This summer, Adore Delano is embarking on the RuPaul's Battle of the Seasons tour, which will take him through the Midwest, Australia, Brazil, and the United Kingdom. It's undoubtedly a lot of travel and a lot of personalities, but for Delano it is also a great opportunity to tour his music live. Over the course of its eight seasons, it has been interesting to see the course that different *RuPaul's Drag Race* alums have taken in the continuation of their careers post-show. It's a fast fame that is both powerful and elusive. Many have created music, but few have produced full albums and even fewer have performed those albums live.

While he is indeed a drag queen of great proportions, Delano's music speaks to a much wider audience than what you might get from an Alaska Thunderfuck, Willam, or Manila Luzon single. In reality, Adore Delano is just as much a recording artist as is Kylie Minogue or Katy Perry. There is a professionalism, intention, and industry knowledge that, regardless of the wigs and the makeup, paints a bright future for Adore Delano. The look is killer. The pop music is delicious. The timing is right. This is an artist that will continue to thrive in a world that better keep up.

Be sure to see Adore Delano perform at Twin Cities Pride this year with The Pointer Sisters and The Phoenix Philosophy at Pride in Concert on Saturday, June 25, 2016. More information at www.tcpride.org. ■

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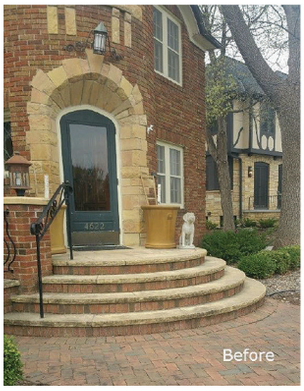
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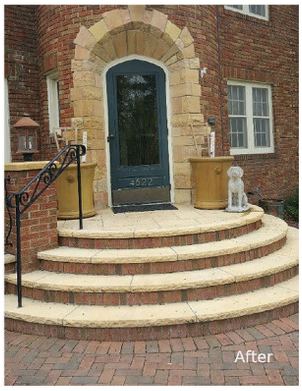




Photo courtesy of Twin Cities Pride

THE ROAD TO HELL... AND BACK

Out & Sober Minnesota

DEFEATS ADDICTION WITH CONNECTION

| BY TERRANCE GRIEP |

CONTINUED ON PAGE 52

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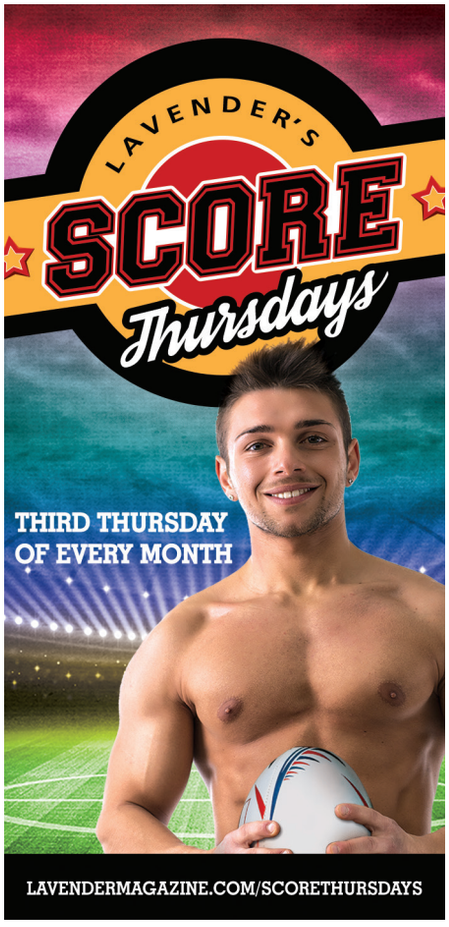
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"We love having a booth in the park," Champion enthuses. "We use this as an outreach opportunity. We have volunteers from the LGBTQ recovery community staff the booth and talk about their experiences with recovery and let people know about our activities.

We've been told the road to hell is paved with good intentions, but all English majors know the road to hell is paved with statistics, and the Pride Institute would agree. The Pride Institute tells us that members of the GLBTQ community are more likely than non-gays to struggle with alcohol and drug addiction and less likely than non-gays to seek help once they do. And the statistics are even more dire when talking about queer youth. The problem, ultimately, is a feeling of emotional disconnection from others, and this disconnection can drive members of the GLBTQ community to drink, literally. Fortunately, this disconnection can be undone by one of Twin Cities Pride's 2016 Community Champions of Pride: Out & Sober Minnesota.

According to its website (www.outandsoberminnesota.org), Out & Sober Minnesota is "an organization dedicated to reconnecting LGBTQ addicts and alcoholics with the community and helping them build healthy, clean, and sober networks." The means to that laudable end are social events carefully crafted by a volunteer board of directors. The whole spectacle might look somewhat frivolous from the outside, but the stakes are nothing short of sobriety itself. Kevin Champion, Out & Sober Minnesota's board chair, insists, "It is important for people in recovery to build a network of sober friends and have fun."

Fun serves as Out & Sober Minnesota's core, but the group came into being to address a dreadful problem that first reared its head in the era of MTV and Ronald Reagan. "In 1984, many twelve-step recovery groups did not accept LGBTQ people," Champion recalls. So in that year, the Twin Cities Gay and Lesbian Roundup was born; it was intended as safe haven for GLBTQ addicts who had been deflected by Alcoholics Anonymous.

In 1998, a parallel group, GLBT in AA, came into being "to help plan for the International Conference of Alcoholics Anonymous which was held in Minneapolis in the year 2000," according to Champion. After multiple permutations, this group melded with its predecessor and took on the current name Out & Sober Minnesota, as a signal that people suffering under any addiction, not just alcoholism, were welcome. "This change was part of an effort to make the organization more inclusive," Champion asserts. "We want to make sure that all people in our community are included, not just those who identify as GLBT."

This inclusion becomes obvious to members who engage in Out & Sober Minnesota's social events, which run the full gamut of yin and yang. Recent examples are a meditation workshop (an introduction to the inner workings of inner peace), snow-tubing (an introduction to the outer workings of winter gravity), and Spring Fling (an event designed to match sponsors with sponsees via an unlikely *Dating Game* format). "If people do not have fun, make friends, or feel like they are part of something, it is hard to maintain long term recovery," Champion assures.

That's not just ivory tower theory of which the chair speaks; incidentally, it's hard-won experience that makes Champion's involvement with Out & Sober Minnesota so personal. "When I entered recovery, I had one sober friend," Champion explains. "I started volunteering with Out & Sober Minnesota and gradually built connections and made friends. People who are new to recovery are faced with the challenge of socializing, making friends, and having fun without the aid of substances."

One of the happy side effects of these sundry, substance-free excursions is that they do away with certain preconceptions about the recovery community and its members. "There is a belief that many recovering addicts and alcoholics have that if they do not use substances, they cannot have fun and make friends," Champion observes. "This belief is especially true in the LGBTQ community, but we are a very social people." In further describing Out & Sober Minnesota, the Chairman adds, "We are not a twelve-step group. We support all forms of recovery."

That support will be on full display with Out & Sober Minnesota's participation in this year's Pride festival. Reports Champion, "This is our second year as participants in the Pride parade as well as the Pride festival. This has become one of our biggest events." In fact, Pride represents a kind of meta-event that allows Out & Sober Minnesota to discuss its other events with the general public.

"We love having a booth in the park," Champion enthuses. "We use this as an outreach opportunity. We have volunteers from the LGBTQ recovery community staff the booth and talk about their experiences with recovery and let people know about our activities. One of our goals is to reach out to all members of the LGBTQ recovery community, or those considering recovery, and let them know they are welcome here." In other words, Out & Sober Minnesota's outreach represents another form of reconnection.

And the reconnection will manifest in one final way when members walk a road very different than the one that brought them there, that of the Pride parade route. "We love the fact the members of the LGBTQ recovery community come out to march with us in the parade to show their sober pride," says the Chairman. "We want people in the LGBTQ community at large to know that if they choose to stop using drugs and alcohol, they can have just as much fun — maybe more — in our vibrant recovery community." Ultimately, the key is bringing people together. Champion concludes, "There is a quote by Johann Hari that reads, 'The opposite of addiction is not sobriety, the opposite of addiction is human connection.' This is why we do what we do." ■



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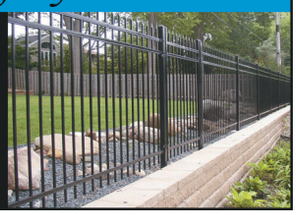
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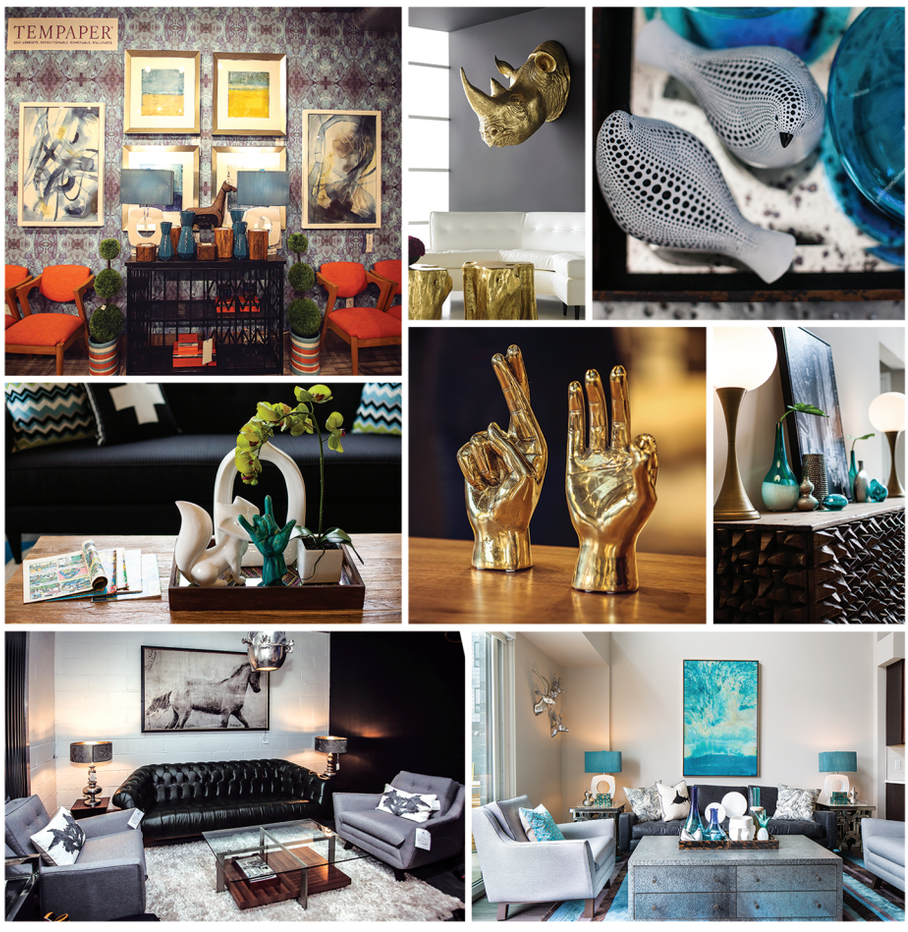


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RIDE REVIEW | BY RANDY STERN | PHOTOS BY RANDY STERN

2016 Dodge Charger



Over the years, I have openly admitted having a soft spot for certain automobiles.

I understand the consequences of making this known publicly. It may challenge my credibility as a journalist. It may peg me as a writer with no backbone. This is why I correctly do not identify myself as a journalist.

Why should I explain myself again? It is because this job puts a huge spotlight that burns too hot for us to put ourselves in precarious situations. There is a risk in walking on the plank between presentation, words, and personality. I love this work, but there are moments when we forget the responsibility we have to you.

In this case, it is all about a car.

In the current history of this work, there had been one automobile that tripped my trigger. It resides inside a soft part of my heart. Upon the occasion of Pride weekend here in the Twin Cities, I felt compelled to discuss it a bit further.

Which leads me to consider the following: How can I objectively review something like the 2016 Dodge Charger R/T Scat Pack? Many of my colleagues have with varying results. We can all agree that the 392 HEMI's power is intoxicating, the exhaust is loud and brash, it is a comfortable and smooth place to be and the paint job is fabulous. However,

CONTINUED ON PAGE 58

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the story is not just an objective review. It is beyond that.

It is about happiness…and the pursuit thereof.

Happiness usually comes from positive stimuli. If you face the Charger R/T Scat Pack and its SRT nose, you get an angry scowl. Yet, this angry face makes the R/T Scat Pack (and its SRT brethren) unique in its way to strike fear or engage with its fans. It is like a lion: you could tame it, but why bother? It will strike fear, even if it is tame.

The Charger's overall look has always been that link between its famous past and the needs of today. The four-door sedan has a silhouette that does trace back to 1968. With the mid-cycle refreshes from the last model year, the three-dimensional look replete with wide "track" taillights cast a looming shadow upon anything or anyone that it encounters. This is exactly what the Charger should always be: an imposing and formidable force upon the land.

If one phrase can sum up its overall design, it would be: "Just look at it." Granted, it is not everyone's cup of tea, but one cannot ignore a Plum Crazy, SRT-powered Mopar machine. That is what makes me very happy.

The interior is very appropriate. The seating is cloth, adorned with a silver Bee on the seatback. They are bolstered enough for my big body to settle in behind the wheel. We did get five adults inside, even with the huge driveshaft tunnel right down the middle. The instrumentation is great, including the customizable TFT screen in-between the two dials. The UConnect 8.4-inch touchscreen is one of my favorite pieces of the Charger, which includes access to mobile apps and the Performance Pages. This model featured Garmin-based navigation, which is clear and precise, especially with directions.

The trunk opens high to access the 16.5 cubic feet of space. The rear seats do fold down for longer pieces of cargo. It may not be the sexiest part of the Charger, but it will come in handy when doing things. For example, transporting stuff to detail the car. Or, running away from home…

As I said earlier, the 392 HEMI V8 offers intoxicating power. That sound and fury of the exhaust alone reminds you that there's 485 horses underneath that hood ready to be unleashed. It is one of the few engines around that stirs my soul. You hear it, but you certainly do not feel it. It is bolted on tight, spewing smooth power at a high volume. Acceleration is quick, but it cruises extremely well.

Connected to the 392 HEMI is the ZF-designed 8HP70 eight-speed automatic. Smooth shifts enable the power of the V8 to be tapped at very low revs. You can put your foot down and it will reach the red line. A lighter throttle keeps up shifts tapped at an average of 2,500 RPM. The R/T Scat Pack is only available with rear-wheel drive — as a proper muscle car should be.

Filling it up with Premium fuel, I managed a fuel economy average of 18.9 MPG. Let's be honest…do you really buy a Charger R/T Scat Pack for fuel efficiency?

A performance-tuned independent front suspension is complemented by a five-link independent rear set-up. This provided a combined experience that enabled great cornering and a very smooth ride. I also like the steering, which is balanced in Normal drive mode. I get a decent turning radius, but the on-road and on-center feel is quite good. If you switch the drive mode to Sport, things get a little tighter and heavier. One word of caution: switching to Sport turns off the traction control. This may be great, if you're the fearless type; however, I like being in control…so, I would rather have the traction control on.

Brembo takes care of the calipers and braking power, yet the discs seem a bit small for the job of stopping a 4,395-pound car. For the record, the vented and slotted discs are 14.2 inches up front and 13.8 inches at rear, contrasting against the set of 20-inch wheels. Stopping power is actually quite good in both normal and panic situations. A set of Goodyear Eagle RS-A 2 tires are shod on the big alloy wheels. They grip OK, but I would even venture to switch them to even grippier rubber. My choice would be a set of Michelin Pilot Super Sports, but that's just me.

You can get a standard 2016 Dodge Charger SE with the Pentastar V6 for a starting price of $27,995. Chargers also come in SXT, R/T, and SRT. This Plum Crazy R/T Scat Pack tester came with a sticker price of $41,685.

To sum up: I truly love this car. It continues to trip all of my triggers in terms of performance, driving experience, and other intangible traits that make this car a standout among others.

However, I did feel some pressure and stress from the people who have experienced this Charger with me. Do I need to do a burnout? No…and I did not. Do I have to ratchet the car beyond the speed limit? The problem with a car like this is that it wants to go fast. The Charger eggs you on to reach limits that can threaten your driving privileges. For some, this is a good problem to have.

Still, that Plum Crazy color is a soothing one. It is Pride wrapped up in a Plum Crazy package. That alone is happiness in a nutshell. ■








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DATELAND | BY JENNIFER PARELLO

On Bea Arthur and Men in Underpants

Confession: lately, I've been spending a lot of time looking at men in their underpants.

It all began when I was searching for news on Bea Arthur. Although she died several years ago, she's still making headlines today. Granted, most of these headlines are written by fanboys debating whether she will best be remembered as Vera Charles, the drunken sidekick in *Mame*, or as Maude. And there are entire websites dedicated to the vagaries of her relationship with *The Golden Girls* costar Betty White.

The mere thought of Bea Arthur just sent me on a Google spree. I will get back to men in underpants soon, but first I need to share a few delectable Bea tidbits that I just unearthed:

- After reading a comment in *TV Guide* from a disgruntled Iowa housewife who said that Bea's character wasn't as interesting as the other women on *The Golden Girls*, Bea called the woman and said, "This is Bea Arthur, and I want to talk to you about what you said in *TV Guide*." The housewife was horrified. She said she was misquoted. "I didn't mean it. Is it really you? I love the show. I take it back." And Bea responded, "That's what I thought. Okay, that's better."
- Bea and her *Mame* co-star Angela Lansbury were spotted attending the movie *The Opposite of Sex* together. Two gay men sat behind them and reported: "They were laughing at the dirtiest stuff in that movie. We were like, 'Who drove? How many cocktails did they have on the way over?'"
- Singer Rufus Wainwright once summoned the nerve to approach Bea. He said, "I'm sure you hear this all the time, but I was going through a rough patch and *The Golden Girls* brought me so much entertainment and comfort. It really helped me get through the bad spell. You're so wonderful. You made me feel like you're my grandmother." To which she responded, "I'm not your fucking grandmother." Then she belched and walked off.

God, I love her!

But, now, back to men in underpants. My appetite for all-things-Bea led me to a message board powered by the most deliciously catty gay men. It is a treasure trove of baseless rumor and innuendo on long-dead divas forgotten by everyone but gentlemen of a certain age and me.

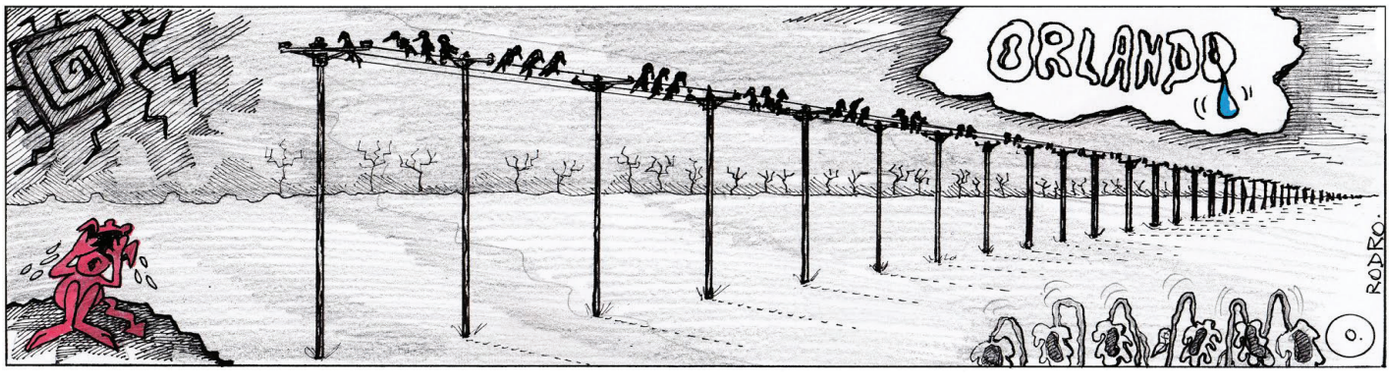
I am a gay man in every critical sense, with the small exception that I don't like to sleep with men. I have nothing specific against penises. I consider them to be like entertaining, foreign chaps with fiery temperaments that are perfectly amusing until they try to shove their opinions down your throat.

So, I'm confused by the fact that lately I find myself turning my attention to discussion areas that focus on men in their underpants, which, along with gossip about dead movie stars, is a particular focus of the message board. The strangest thing is that I don't find the images titillating at all. In fact, I'm usually focused on what's happening in the background of the image, rather than the main show in the foreground.

Just this morning, I spent an hour reading comments dissecting a recent selfie by Justin Bieber. In this picture, the singer is wearing briefs and grabbing his crotch in what appears to be a messy hotel suite. I was really disturbed by the fact that he would take a selfie with a pile of dirty towels on his floor.

I'm struggling to wrap this column up in a neat bow that puts this nonsense in some bigger context. So I'm going to skip that. Maybe it's just fine to obsess about Bea Arthur and men in underpants and not worry about how that fits in the broad scope of human existence. ■

TROLÍN, UN DIABLITO ROSA POR RODRO



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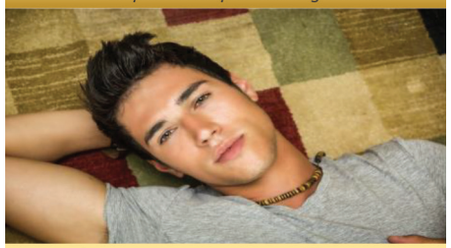
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AT LARGE | BY JOHN MARK

High Turnover

My work history is a running joke among my friends, particularly from the age of 19 to 24. You could say I've lived a colorful life. I worked a total of ten jobs in my early 20s. Judge me not. Surprisingly, I have never been fired. It's worth mentioning that I also have moved around a lot. In no particular order here lies my gauntlet of employment…

1. WATCH SALESMAN

(Buy My Junk)

The Job: Selling watches out of Swatch's flagship store on 5th Avenue in Manhattan. Wear black pants and a black t-shirt. Remind everyone who walks in that these babies are water resistant, shock resistant, and come with a two-year warranty. Highlights include cliché statements from management on reaching sales goals and sarcastic co-workers. **How Long I Lasted:** Four months. Only because they were so flexible with my schedule. **What I Learned:** How to convince people to buy something they don't need.

2. TCF STADIUM SECURITY

(You Can't Sit Here)

The Job: Guarding the entrance to the student section during football games so that people without student section tickets may not enter. **How Long I Lasted:** One terrible day. **What I Learned:** Any job requiring you to interact with a mass of drunk college students is not worth it.

3. HIGH-END BRAND AMBASSADOR

(The Champagne is Flowing)

The Job: Executing product demonstrations, catering, and guest services for high-end clients like Swarovski, Samsung, Fujifilm, Chanel, Google, Virgin Mobile, Condé Nast, *Wired* magazine, Delta, and many others in Manhattan's finest residences and venues. A lot of private parties and a lot of product launch events. **How Long I Lasted:** Three years freelancing six to fourteen days a month. **What I Learned:** How to serve fine dining. That it takes a village of wealthy people to support a corporation. There's a lot of money to be made in private high-end events. Showing up in clean pressed clothes, speaking confidently, and smiling a lot does not always come effortlessly when life gives you lemons.

4. FEATURES EDITOR

(We'd Love to Feature You)

The Job: Writing and producing editorial content for a high-end art and fashion magazine. I did my best to advocate for more queer features on our pages. Thankfully, my supervising editor was receptive and supportive of this pursuit. While I was focused on writing and producing a finessed product for the magazine, what I didn't realize at the time was how much these individuals would teach me about myself. **How Long I Lasted:** Part-time for two years. **What I Learned:** I learned from my features that being unique, weird, and different can lead to great things. I learned, after covering it for three seasons, that New York Fashion Week is not that cool and has become more of a media circus than a means for merchandising fashion. I learned how to craft persuasive emails. I also learned that the key to a celebrity's heart is vulnerability, respect, and transparency.

5. LATIN RESTAURANT WAIT ASSISTANT

(More Water on 32)

The Job: Wait assisting at the now-closed Nicollet mall restaurant, Masa, a brain child of the D'Amico & Sons family, came with high lunch traffic and an expensive dinner menu. The manager, Michelle Jensen, was an incredible joy to work under. **How Long I Lasted:** Five months. **What I Learned:** Time flies when your job is chaos. Any job becomes easier with reliable and consistent access to hot coffee. There is a special kind of satisfaction that comes with being able to leave each day with cash tips in hand. Looking busy is more important than being busy. Be nice to your server.

6. WARDROBE STYLIST

(Please Don't Let it Touch the Ground)

The Job: Running garment bags around town. Making sure things don't get dirty. Dressing models and actors. Bringing life to the vision of the photographer or director you are working for. **How Long I Lasted:** One year. **What I Learned:** Wardrobe styling involves a lot of running around. Everyone has an opinion about fashion. Working in wardrobe on a feature film means you won't sleep. Friendship and trust with showrooms and boutiques is like gold.

7. MODEL/ACTOR

(Hi, I'm John Mark, I'm 6'2"…)

The Job: It's not a real job. More like a hustle. Highlights included some work for Best Buy, Target, Panasonic, Adidas, New York Fashion Week, as well as paid contracts in Shanghai. Lowlights include the humility and resilience needed, to be told "no" 500 times. **How Long I Lasted**: An irregular love/hate relationship lasting seven years, full-time for one. **What I Learned:** Modeling is a great way to travel for free, but it comes with a lot of working for free. I also learned that being a model in Asia is way easier and way more fun.

8. DATA ENTRY

(Is This the Last Pile?)

The Job: Entering file info at the mortgage loan office at which my mother worked. **How Long I Lasted:** Six days. **What I Learned:** Data entry is not for creative types. Purchasing a home comes with a lot of paperwork.

9. FRENCH RESTAURANT BUSBOY

(Table 12 Needs a Punch in the Face)

The Job: Bussing and wait assisting at a new French restaurant located in what was once Manhattan's historic Limelight. The building held great notoriety in the '80s as a playground for Andy Warhol, a community for club kids, and a zenith for the popular consumption of ecstasy. The French restaurant was a pricy and less exciting purgatory of poor service, disrespectful management, and disorganized operations. The best part of this job was the beauty and energy of the building and the staff shift meal at four. **How Long I Lasted:** Four weeks. After nearly a month of emotionally abusive management, late paychecks, and dishonest tip-outs, I sat in the liquor freezer with another bus boy and shared a bottle of Patrón tequila before walking out mid-way through a shift, never to return. **What I Learned:** There are few things more intense than the high-end restaurant scene in Manhattan, but there is no excuse for name-calling in the workplace.

10. CHOREOGRAPHER

(I Love What I Do)

The Job: Creating dances for theaters, schools, music videos, and special events. **How Long I Lasted**: Professionally, started three years ago and still kicking. **What I Learned**: Ask for what you are worth. Above all, respect your dancers' time and energy. Don't be afraid to create movement that's a little outside the box. Understand that people are looking to be entertained. Moving your body is never a bad idea. ■



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